

Worksession

Agenda Item	7
Meeting Date	March 21, 2005
Prepared By	Rob Inerfeld Senior Planner
Approved By	Barbara B. Matthews City Manager

Discussion Item	Metropolitan Branch Trail
Background	<p>The first phase of the Takoma Park section of the Metropolitan Branch Trail, a regional multi-use trail, located along Takoma Avenue and Fenton Street was completed in the Fall of 2003. The original plans for the trail included a 366-foot long boardwalk that was intended to protect some of the large hardwood trees along Takoma Avenue, across the street from Jequie Park. The construction bids for the project came in too high. Until additional funding was secured, the Council decided to delay construction of the boardwalk which had been proposed to protect certain trees along the trail and to satisfy AASHTO guidelines for multi-purpose trails. A temporary stone dust trail was built in its place.</p> <p>During the construction of the stone dust trail, the contractor excavated and compacted soils in an area two to three feet beyond the limits of construction in violation of the approved tree protection plan, damaging some of the existing trees along the trail. Mitigation measures were taken to minimize the damage that had occurred.</p> <p>An additional \$113,440 in grant funds has since been secured by the City to complete the trail. The Metropolitan Branch Trail Work Group was reconvened to assist in the finalization of the plans for this second phase of the trail. Two general options with several variations were considered: the construction of the proposed boardwalk and paving of the stone dust trail. The workgroup most recently met on March 15 to consider the options.</p> <p>A majority of the members of the workgroup attending the March 15 meeting were comfortable with a limited relaxation of the AASHTO guidelines and approved by a vote of five to one, to pave the entire remaining section of the trail. Said approval is conditioned upon the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the width of the path of the trail does not exceed 11 feet in from the face of the curb to the edge of the path farthest from the curbline; 2. That the paved width of the trail does not exceed eight feet and a three-foot buffer be provided along the length of the trail, except in the area of two identified hardwood trees where the paved width of the trail would be gradually narrowed to 7 feet; 3. That construction bid documents clearly specify that protective fencing must be installed at the 11-foot line and that all heavy equipment work from the

<p>Background continued</p>	<p>street-side in;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. That all care is exercised in the removal of additional dirt so as to not further disturb tree roots; 5. That a construction supervisor is hired to ensure compliance with the approved tree protection measures during the period of excavation; 6. That a new drainage inlet is designed and installed to allow for the construction of a safe and continuous asphalt trail at the location where the trail currently ramps down to the stormwater inlet; 7. That the retaining wall will be expanded to meet County regulatory requirements; 8. That a ground cover such as liriope is planted in the buffer between the trail and the street; and 9. That interpretative historical signage, benches, and additional landscaping be installed as the budget permits. <p>The workgroup members further supported the installation of a second speed table on Takoma Avenue between Buffalo Avenue and Fenton Street as an additional traffic calming measure.</p> <p>The following Takoma Park residents attended the March 15 Metropolitan Branch Trail Work Group meeting: Jim Evans, George French, Carol Lindeman, Robert Patten, Frances Phipps, and Jim Sebastian. Councilmember Joy Austin Lane was also present.</p> <p>It should be noted that the following members of the workgroup did not support the action of the workgroup:</p> <p>Mr. George French did not agree to these conditions and said that he would like the stone dust trail to remain the way it is and that the funds available should be used for landscaping and planting trees.</p> <p>Ms. Lorraine Pearsall, who did not attend the March 15 workgroup meeting, has emailed her concerns regarding the recommendations of the workgroup to individual Councilmembers. It should be noted that the 4 foot buffer referenced by Ms. Pearsall in her email was not endorsed by the workgroup and has not been included in the listing of their recommendations.</p>
<p>Policy</p>	<p>To “provide for safe, pleasant and convenient bicycle access that contributes to the quality of life” (through construction of) the “Metropolitan Branch Trail as a direct and continuous trail for pedestrians and bicyclists.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Takoma Park Master Plan, 2000</p>

Fiscal Impact	<p>Available Funding Sources</p> <table> <tr> <td>Montgomery County</td><td>\$ 80,000</td></tr> <tr> <td>MD Recreational Trails Grant</td><td>\$ 29,747</td></tr> <tr> <td>Remaining funds from original funding</td><td><u>\$ 3,693</u></td></tr> <tr> <td>Total</td><td>\$113,440</td></tr> </table> <p>Proposed Project Budgets</p> <p>Cost estimates for the two options considered by the workgroup are included as an attachment. Please note that the cost of constructing the proposed boardwalk exceeds available funding.</p>	Montgomery County	\$ 80,000	MD Recreational Trails Grant	\$ 29,747	Remaining funds from original funding	<u>\$ 3,693</u>	Total	\$113,440
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Attachments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparison of Options for Completing the Stone Dust Section of the Trail • Email comments from Lorraine Pearsall (March 16, 2005) 								
Recommendation	Discuss alternatives for completing the trail and consider recommendations of Metropolitan Branch Trail Work Group.								
Special Consideration	Funding provided by Montgomery County for the completion of the trail must be spent by June 30, 2005.								

Metropolitan Branch Trail

Comparison of Options for Completing the Stone Dust Section of Trail

OPTION ONE: Pave the Entire Section

Pros

- Lower maintenance costs than boardwalk.
- Lower replacement costs than boardwalk.
- Safer than boardwalk when wet.
- Could be constructed under budget and within the time constraints of the County grant funds.
- Would allow for additional landscaping to be installed.

Cons

- Would not comply with AASHTO guidelines if the trail is less than 5 feet from the street.

Funds Available

Montgomery County	\$80,000
Recreational Trails Grant	\$29,747
Remaining funds from original funding	\$3,693
Total	\$113,440

Costs

Asphalt paving	\$17,000
Relocate stormwater inlet	\$20,000
Fix speed table	\$5,000
Install new speed table	\$5,000
Repair slope	\$10,000
Relocate guy pole	\$2,000
Landscaping and tree mitigation	\$40,000
10% contingency	\$9,900
Total	\$108,900

Difference	\$4,540
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Metropolitan Branch Trail

Comparison of Options for Completing the Stone Dust Section of Trail

OPTION TWO: Pave 96 feet and build a 270-foot long boardwalk on the rest

This option entails paving most of the section south of the stormwater inlet and building the boardwalk on the remainder of the stone dust trail. The boardwalk could be built using helical piers or standard pier footers.

Pros

- The boardwalk would comply with minimum AASHTO guidelines.
- Using standard pier footers could potentially bring the project under budget although there would be additional engineering and design costs.

Cons

- The paved section would not comply with AASHTO guidelines unless it is at least 5 feet from the street.
- Cost exceeds funding available.
- Complying with the requirements of the State grant could potentially jeopardize the availability of the County grant funds.

Funds Available

Montgomery County	\$80,000
Recreational Trails Grant	\$29,747
Remaining funds from original funding	\$3,693
Total	\$113,440

Costs

Asphalt paving	\$2,133
270 foot boardwalk	\$108,853
Design and Inspection Services	\$5,000
Fix speed table	\$5,000
Repair slope	\$10,000
Relocate guy pole	\$2,000
10% contingency	\$13,299
Total	\$146,285
 Difference	 -\$32,845

>>> 03/16 8:13 PM >>>

Dear Councilmembers,

I know we are working hard to achieve a solution for the bike trail. I do support abandoning the boardwalk and paving the remainder of the trail provided that what we do is protective of the trees. The current suggestion as I understand it is to encroach up to one foot into the trees to provide a 3 foot buffer, and I find myself very uncomfortable with this suggestion. The trail is currently 10 to 10.5 feet in width, so there is room for an 8 foot trail together with a 2 to 2.5 ft buffer, which could now be nicely landscaped with compact shrubs that do not spread. The intensive traffic calming measures along Takoma Ave, such the existing speed table as well as the narrowed road, have already slowed down the traffic....and a second speed table near the park is planned that will slow it down even more. With these measures I don't see why the width of the trail that currently exists (10 to 10.5 ft) can't be used to finish the trail without encroaching more into the trees.

I also am aware that at the end of the meeting when many people were not there, it was suggested that part of the trail should have a 4 foot buffer that would encroach even more. I don't think this is was the right thing to do in view of all of the concerns, and I am not sure where this stands at this point.

I am forwarding to you my message to Rob. I unfortunately thought the meeting was at 7:30pm when it was 6 pm (too many meetings), but I am still an active member of the committee and have been since the beginning.

I hope that we don't take risks with the trees, and I don't think we need to. I am concerned that when laying a roadbed, encroachment into the trees will expand further than anticipated, and that makes me very uncomfortable.

--Lorraine Pearsall